

FOR HOSTS

A path to independence

for San Francisco's foster youth 18+



Launchp^ds

Helping youth successfully
transition from foster care
to adulthood.

Launchpads is a program of **Freedom Forward**, with funding from
The **Tipping Point Community** and the support of San Francisco Family
and Children's Services.



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What is Launchpads?

Participants have access to...



Vetted places to live
with compatible hosts



Monthly subsidy from San
Francisco County



Additional funds for
move-in costs and more



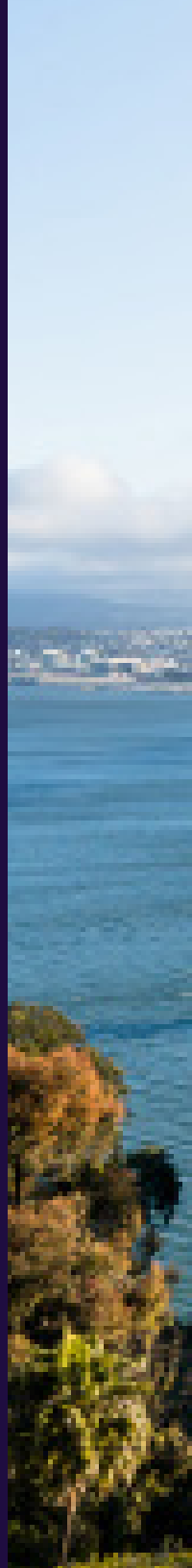
A social worker who
checks in monthly



Conflict mediation and
problem solving



A community of hosts,
youth, and service providers





Getting started

What is Launchpads?

Launchpads connects San Francisco youth in extended foster care to hosts in the Bay Area. The hosts are willing to rent out space in their homes (usually a private bedroom, but it could be an entire unit) for below market value. We do this with an app where youth and hosts both create a profile. Hosts' profiles include information on the homes they're renting, and youth can look at the available homes. Launchpads is a project of Freedom Forward, a non-profit that serves youth in San Francisco.

Who are the Launchpads youth?

Eligible youth are in San Francisco extended foster care (ages 18-21) and have either done a SILP assessment or been recommended by their social worker. A SILP (Supported Independent Living Placement) assessment is an assessment to determine a young person's readiness to live independently. Youth must be approved by their social worker to participate in Launchpads. We do not discriminate based on race, ethnicity, national origin, legal status, language, color, religion, sexual orientation, or gender identity. When a youth has a SILP placement (such as a room in your home), they receive a monthly stipend of \$1050 that can go toward their housing costs.

How do I get started?

First, you should go to the Launchpads app (<https://app.wearelaunchpads.org/>) and fill out an application. You will be required to authorize a background check for everyone over the age of 18 living in your home, and you will be asked for 2 personal references. We will conduct an interview with you, and we will contact your references for a phone interview. We also ask you to complete our six-hour training. Once these steps are done and you are approved by Launchpads, you may upload information about yourself and your home, including pictures. You will be able to list your house rules and any information you would like potential tenants to know about you and your home.

Please note: Just like with Airbnb, the Launchpads process is driven by the people looking for homes—in this case, the youth. They can search through available homes and choose the ones they think will be a good fit. You, as a host, will not be able to search through profiles of youth and choose the ones you would like to have in your home.

Common things youth look for

Location is usually the most important factor for youth: is the home near school, work, friends, etc.? Also very important is cost: can they afford the rent being charged? Additionally, they may be interested in what the space looks like, whether the house rules are acceptable to them, and whether they think it will be a comfortable place to live.

Moving in

Waiver

We require all hosts to sign a waiver, releasing Freedom Forward and Launchpads from liability for certain aspects of Launchpads participation.

Matching process

Once you have completed the steps listed above and are fully approved as a Launchpads host, youth who are participating in Launchpads will be able to view your home on the app. If they are interested, they can message you through the app, and you may respond. If you both want to move forward, the social worker will set up and facilitate an in-person or virtual meeting, which will include the social worker, the youth, and you. You should invite anyone else who lives in the home to attend as well, if at all possible. The youth may also request that other individuals attend with them (e.g. their Court Appointed Special Advocate, or CASA). After the interview, we ask that you and the youth wait 24 hours to decide whether the youth will move in. If you both agree to move forward, you can discuss next steps with the youth. You and the youth will sign a shared living agreement that you will customize to reflect your rules and expectations.

Interviewing youth

When a youth and their social worker schedule a meeting with you, it is up to you to decide what you want to ask them. Below we've provided some sample questions you might consider asking.

Getting to know a youth

- Tell me about your dreams for your future.
- How do you like to spend your free time?
- What are you hoping your relationship with a host will be like?
- What makes you feel comfortable at home? If you lived here, what could I do to make you feel comfortable here?
- Can you tell me about a positive living situation you've had? What about a negative living situation?

Rules and expectations

- Are there any house guidelines that you saw in my profile that you think might be hard for you to live with?
- _____ expectation is very important to me- how does that feel to you?
- How long are you hoping to stay?

Living compatibility

- What is your daily routine?
- What time do you generally wake up and go to sleep?
- How clean do you like to keep your space?
- What is the best way for us to talk about problems that arise/what is the best way to make a request?
- How often do you like to have friends over?
- Do you feel comfortable if I have friends over?
- What is your routine like during COVID-19? What would we need to do to make sure we both feel safe (e.g. vaccinations, social distancing)?
- What are your pet-peeves when living with someone?

Miscellaneous

- What are some of your concerns about moving in

here?

- When you've had a bad day what do you need me to know?
- Do you hope to share meals together sometimes?
- Do you cook most of your meals at home?
- How do you like to spend your weekends?
- Do you smoke?
- Is there anything else I should know?

Rent, security deposit, and other expenses

Youth in an approved home will receive approximately \$1050 a month for living expenses. You will decide what rent to charge, but we do ask that you make it as affordable as possible for the youth. Launchpads will donate \$1000 towards a security deposit, and we also ask youth to contribute \$200 towards the deposit themselves, for a total security deposit of \$1200. If the youth leaves the home in the condition they found it, with no new damage, we promise them that they will be able to keep the entire deposit, including the \$1000 paid by Launchpads on their behalf. Of course, if there is damage other than normal wear and tear, you may use part or all of the deposit to cover the costs. Finally, you will need to decide if you will charge for other expenses such as utilities.

Separate leases or rental agreements

It is up to you to determine whether you'd like your Launchpads living arrangement to include lease or rental agreement with your tenant. We do not require it, but if you think it would be helpful, you may draft a lease. It must comply with state and local laws and regulations.

Guidelines, rules, and expectations

We ask that you provide youth a welcoming, nonjudgmental space with a private bedroom and access to, at a minimum, the kitchen and a bathroom. We also require that you:

- Have homeowners or rental insurance
- If you are a renter, written permission to sublet part of the space
- Complete the vetting process (see below)
- Allow a social worker access to your home approximately once a month
- Attend a six-hour Launchpads training
- Abide by the agreements you make with the youth

Finally, we ask that you abide by the same rules we ask youth to abide by:

Drugs and alcohol

Hosts may not possess or consume illegal drugs while hosting a youth in a Launchpads home. (Note that youth under 21 are prohibited from possessing or consuming alcohol as well.)

Physical aggression

Physical aggression is strictly prohibited.

Romantic relationships

Under no circumstances may a host have a romantic relationship with youth living in their home through Launchpads.

Verbal/written abuse

Verbal or written abuse, racial slurs, and physical violence or threats are unacceptable.

Kindness

Kindness goes a long way in making things work! Do your best to treat your tenant with kindness and respect. If you are having challenges, please reach out to the Launchpads staff so we can help.

Note that in addition to applying these same rules to youth, we also require that youth not use products that cause house fires (including candles, smoke, or incense), and of course require that they leave the home in the same condition as when they move in.

Support for you

Training

We have a six-hour training that covers trauma informed care, successful communication, the role of social workers and resources available to you. This training is required for Launchpads hosts who are sharing space with young people, but is not required if hosts are renting out a separate unit.

Facilitated conversation and problem solving

It can be challenging to live in a home with people you have just met. We want to make sure you and your tenant have the best relationship possible and can handle any disagreements that come up. We have contracted with Community Boards, a San Francisco nonprofit that offers mediation services. They will meet with you and the youth approximately one month after the youth moves in, and have a conversation with both of you to make sure things are going well. If you need help addressing issues, they will be able to help. They do not take sides; they help ev-

everyone communicate clearly to reach an agreement that works for you both.

Launchpads and Freedom Forward staff

Monica Balinoff is the Launchpads Director, and she is available during business hours to help you in any way she can. You may reach her at Monica@freedom-forward.org.

Community

The other hosts in the Launchpads community may be a resource to you as well. You'll get to know them through voluntary trainings, get-togethers, and meetings that Launchpads plans to facilitate.

Additional support for youth

Social worker

The youth's extended foster care social worker will be a part of this process the entire way. First, they approve youth to have a profile on the app. Then they set up a meeting between youth and host, and they facilitate the meeting. They then do an inspection to make sure the home meets SILP requirements. Finally, they continue to be the youth's social worker, which means they will meet with youth monthly.

HYPE Center

Freedom Forward, the organization that runs Launchpads, has another program that offers many services for youth. Some of these services include:

- Therapy and mental health services provided by West-Coast Children's Clinic

- Education support through Five Keys
- Legal workshops provided by Justice at Last
- Financial literacy classes provided by the International Rescue Committee
- Care packages and access to funds to further their goals

Fun Fund

Launchpads has a small fund available to youth to help build their relationship with their hosts. This fund allows youth to take their host out for a meal, a movie, or other fun activity.

Moving Out

Planned end of agreement

When the youth moves in, you will decide together how long they will stay, and that will be part of your shared living agreement. As that time nears, you and the youth can plan how they'll move out. You can let them know what you expect them to clean, and how you expect the space to be left.

Unexpected or unplanned moving out

We certainly hope that it will be a good match, and that any challenges can be resolved with the help of your social worker, Launchpads, and Community Boards. But ultimately, you and the youth may not get along. The youth may end the agreement at any time by providing written notice to Launchpads and you. If at all possible, we ask that they

give one month's notice. If you as the host want to end a Launchpads match and have the youth move out early, we ask that you comply with relevant laws when doing this. Many launchpads participants will be considered "lodgers," rather than tenants. This is likely the case if a young person is sharing space with you, such as a bathroom or kitchen. By law you are required to give lodgers at least 30-day notice to move out if they have lived in a space for less than a year, and at least 60-days notice if they lived there over a year. If a young person is not sharing space with you (e.g. they are living in an in-law unit) then they will likely be considered a tenant and all relevant tenancy laws apply. For guidance regarding your specific scenario, we advise hosts to seek legal guidance.

Return of security deposit

Freedom Forward will pay \$1000 of the \$1200 security deposit upon move-in. We ask that the youth pay \$200 towards the security deposit. If the youth lives in your home for six months or longer and leaves the home in the condition they found it in, we ask that you return the entire \$1200 to the youth when they move out. Otherwise, you may use what is needed for repairs and return the remainder to Freedom Forward. If a young person stays less than six-months, please return funds directly to Freedom Forward.

Right to confidentiality and privacy

Youth have the right to privacy of information. Therefore, we will not share information about youth without their permission, and their social worker cannot speak on their behalf without permission.

Similarly, we will not share any information about you without your permission.

Resources and emergency contacts

Should an emergency or unplanned situation arise, the following people/entities can be contacted.

Description of resource/services	Contact information an hours	Examples of when to use this resource
Acute emergency: Call 911 for medical, psychiatric, or other emergencies.	911 Available 24 hours per day 7 days per week	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If you have reason to suspect the youth might be in danger• Youth is missing• Youth is a danger to themselves or others• Medical emergency

<p>Mental Health Emergencies: For mental health emergencies that can wait an hour or more for a response call the mobile crisis unit. Provides acute mobile crisis psychiatric crisis evaluation and intervention for adults. Mobile crisis aims to intervene to deescalate crisis early on. Interventions can include psychiatric inpatient hospitalizations, mental health treatment, and referrals.</p>	<p>San Francisco City and County Mobile Crisis (415) 970-4000</p> <p>Available Monday–Friday from 8:30 am to 9:00 pm and Saturdays from 9:00 am to 7:00 pm.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth is threatening suicide • Youth is throwing objects or hitting furniture/walls • Verbally threatening someone • Youth is severely depressed
<p>Concern about the youth’s overall well being (not immediate emergencies): Contact the youth’s social worker. Every youth has a social worker. In instances of particularly high concern, please tell the social worker. If you know the youth social worker to be in town, it is good to call the social worker about these issues as well as the duty line.</p>	<p>Contact info provided upon matching.</p> <p>Monday–Friday 8:00 am–5:00 pm</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Big changes in behavior (e.g. spending all their time in their room). • You suspect, but are not certain, that someone is experiencing intimate partner abuse. • Youth seems to be abusing substances (THC or alcohol). Youth uses a “hard drug” even once (meth, cocaine, heroine, etc). • You are address issues that are far outside the bounds of normal tenancy.

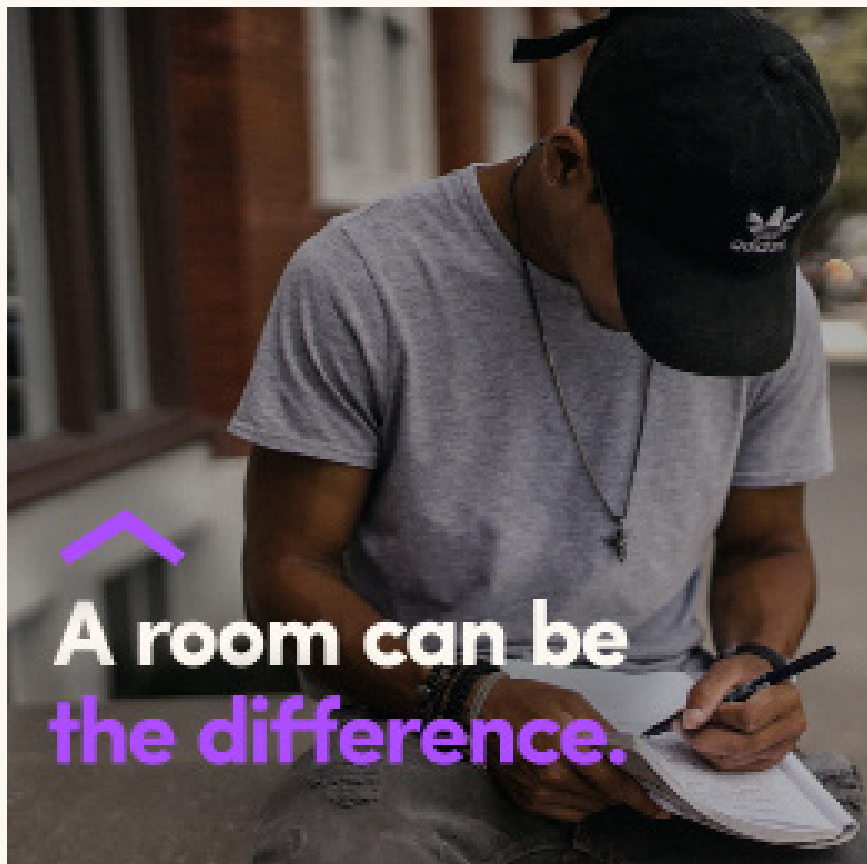
<p>Urgent Matters pertaining to the youth: The duty line is a voicemail staffed by social workers within the teen unit. This number will lead to a voicemail that is checked every 30 minutes to address urgent issues. This is the number you should call should you need to reach an NMD's social worker when they are on vacation, or when an issue need to be attended to within the next 12 hours.</p>	<p>SF Supportive transitions unit duty line</p> <p>415-557-5109</p> <p>Available from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm Monday through Friday.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth's social worker said they would arrange transportation to a medical appointment, but hasn't gotten back to the youth about the plan; There is enough time before the appointment that the duty line might be able to address quickly. • You want to reach the youth's social worker, but they are on vacation.
<p>Emergency support: The TALK Line (415-441-KIDS) is a crisis and counseling line for parents that is answered by a live person. This is meant to support foster parents. This is meant to give you a sounding board for any issue that you might be addressing.</p>	<p>415-441-KIDS</p> <p>24 hours a day, every day.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You need to vent about something frustrating • You need advice about behavior or a second set of ears to understand if something is typical • You are looking for additional resources to address a specific issues

<p>Miscellaneous problems: At Launchpads, we want to be a resource for hosts and youth. If things arise that seem outside of the other resources provided, contact us.</p>	<p>monica@freedom-forward.org</p> <p>Monday-Friday 9:00 am-5:00 pm; Will make best effort to respond to issues with urgency on nights and weekends</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Damage to your house • Uncertainty about how to respond to a specific situation • Seeking resources to better support a young person or yourself
<p>Alternatives to 911: For resources such as a suicide hotline, rehabilitation services, LGBTQ mental health hotline and other resources, see this list of resource.</p>	<p>See the following list of resources:</p> <p>https://tinyurl.com/LPnon911</p>	<p>If you or your host are looking for alternatives to calling 911</p>

Do you have any questions about Launchpads? Or suggestions to improve our program? We want to hear from you! Please feel free to reach out anytime. You can email monica@freedom-forward.org, or call (415) 449-7373. We look forward to helping you have a warm, safe and comfortable home!

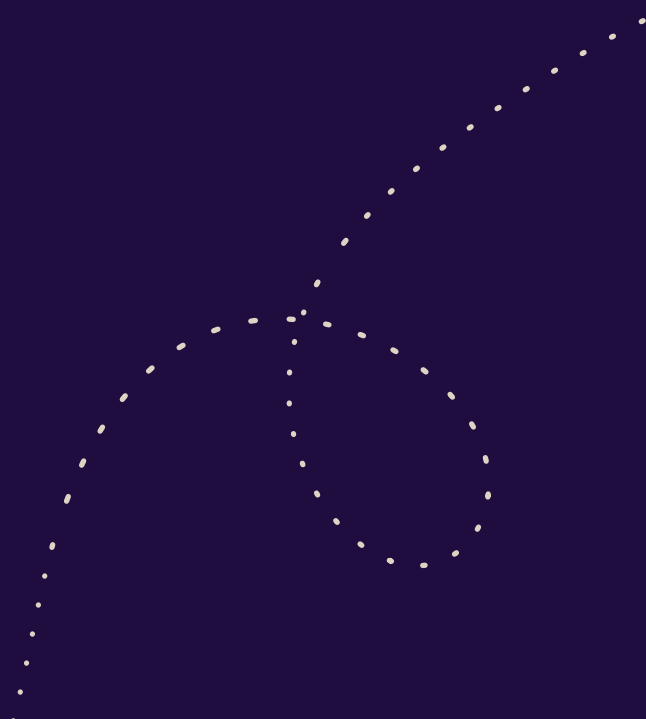
1 in 4 youth exiting foster care experience homelessness within 2 years.

We are looking for hosts and others to join our community.
Learn more at wearelaunchpads.org.



**A room can be
the difference.**

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wearelaunchpads.org